

Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council of Maryland

Overview

Mission:

The Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC), as mandated by the U.S. Attorney General, is an umbrella organization of local, state and federal agencies, as well as representatives from the private sector, that coordinates activities, develops policy, and implements strategic plans to combat terrorism in the State of Maryland. It also coordinates with the other ATACs around the nation. Specifically, the ATAC serves to:

- 1) facilitate intelligence and information sharing among federal, state and local authorities and with relevant private sector participants. (Intelligence and Information Sharing component);
- 2) prevent and disrupt terrorism activity within the state through aggressive investigation and prosecution. (Investigation/Prosecution component);
- 3) assure that the organizational structure and plans exist to effectively prepare for, and respond to, any future terrorist incidents in the state. (Emergency Preparedness and Response component); and
- 4) provide relevant training to its members in order to better equip them to perform their anti-terrorism responsibilities more effectively. (Training component).

Membership:

The ATAC is composed of federal, state and local agencies involved in law enforcement, public health, emergency planning and response, the military and the intelligence community. It also has members from the private sector, predominantly those involved in the security of their facilities. To date, over 225 agencies have joined the ATAC.

The Chief Executives of the following organizations make up the Executive Committee of the ATAC:

U.S. Attorney's Office	Federal Bureau of Investigation
Immigration and	MD Sheriff's Association
Customs Enforcement	MD Police Chief's Association
MD Health Officer's Association	MD Military Department
MD Homeland Security Director	U.S. Coast Guard
MD Fire Chief's Association	2 "Major Jurisdiction" Police Chiefs
MD State Police	MD Metro Fire Chief's Association
MD Fireman's Association	MD Transportation Authority Police

The Executive Committee meets on the third Tuesday of every month.

The effective daily operation and coordination of the ATAC, and all of its components, is performed by a senior Assistant U.S. Attorney appointed by the United States Attorney to serve as the ATAC Coordinator. The Executive Committee, chaired by the ATAC Coordinator, serves as the primary policy making body, with input from all members of the ATAC. Individual

agencies choose the level of participation that best serves their interests and resources.

Components:

The ATAC has four main components, consistent with the mission outlined above: intelligence/information sharing, investigation/prosecution, emergency preparedness/response and training. The ATAC meets in plenary session on the fourth Wednesday of every odd numbered month to review the progress of the components, to share information and to receive training.

Investigation/Prosecution–Joint Terrorism Task Force/United States Attorney

The investigation and prosecution component is represented by the FBI-sponsored Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). It is a co-located, full-time, collaborative federal, state and local law enforcement entity that investigates terrorism activity and individuals who may be engaged in such activity with the goal of preventing and/or aggressively disrupting that activity and, when in the national security interests of the United States, bringing federal prosecutions. The ATAC Coordinator also serves as the Chief of the National Security Section of the U. S. Attorney's Office and, as such, is responsible for the assignment of Assistant U. S. Attorneys to each JTTF investigation at its inception and for the progress of each investigation. The intelligence community has representatives assigned to the JTTF as well in order to facilitate the two-way flow of information between the JTTF and the intelligence community.

Agencies that cannot commit full time resources have provided investigative contacts to facilitate rapid assistance to specific needs in their jurisdictions should they arise.

Intelligence/Information Sharing–Maryland Coordination & Analysis Center

This component is designed to enhance and to serve the investigative component. It is also designed to provide advance notice to appropriate member agencies (both private and public sectors) that will assist them in administering emergency preparedness/response plans. Its purpose is to analyze, evaluate and disseminate information regarding terrorism. It is the goal of the ATAC to disseminate information as widely and as quickly as possible to all interested parties.

On November 3, 2003, the ATAC began operating the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC) which houses personnel from a wide array of agencies (law enforcement, emergency management, transportation, intelligence, first responder, military, public health) whose primary responsibility is to provide information and analysis related to suspected terrorism activity. For efficiency sake, the MCAC also is concerned with general criminal activity since it is often difficult to determine if, and at what point, information related to general crimes may become relevant to terrorism matters. Analytical products produced by the Strategic Analysis Section will be utilized in the investigation and/or prosecution of offending individuals and/or organizations. This Section also produces predictive strategic analysis that will be disseminated to appropriate ATAC members for their use and benefit. Additionally, the Center operates a 24/7 Watch Section that facilitates the immediate receipt and dissemination of critical information. The Center and its work products are also accessible to the national entities responsible for the effective coordination and dissemination of threat information and analytical products, such as the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the Terrorist Screening Center (TSC), the Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC), the TSA Operations Center and CT Watch. When and if other national, or statewide, entities are created, the MCAC will ensure effective two-way communication between them as well.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

Extensive plans exist in Maryland to respond to a major natural disaster or terrorist incident with the Maryland Military Department and the Maryland Emergency Management Agency serving as the focal points of statewide coordination. The Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council (GEMAC) is the body responsible for providing policy guidance to the Governor and to these two agencies. The ATAC Coordinator has been appointed by the Governor to the GEMAC in order to ensure effective coordination. Overall, the ATAC's responsibility is to be certain that all the relevant and necessary agencies understand their role in emergency preparation activities and in consequence management in the event of an incident.

The Maryland Area Maritime Security Committee (MAMSC), co-sponsored by the U. S. Coast Guard and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, has been placed under the ATAC umbrella at its request. The MAMSC's primary function is to enhance the security of the Port of Baltimore. The ATAC structure will assist the MAMSC in better coordinating this critical function. Several members of the ATAC Executive Committee also sit on the Executive Steering Committee of the MAMSC in order to better facilitate coordination.

Training

In addition to the training provided at each meeting of the plenary membership, the ATAC sponsors numerous conferences and seminars with experts from Maryland and elsewhere providing their insights to the membership and better equipping them to perform their critical anti-terrorism functions.

Structure:

The majority of the work done by the ATAC is accomplished by the above-referenced components. Plenary meetings of the ATAC are held in order for the members to be informed of each of the components' activities/plans and for the members to provide input. The meetings are chaired either by the U.S. Attorney or the First Assistant U.S. Attorney.

Each of the four components provide regular reports to the ATAC Coordinator for dissemination to the Executive Committee and to the ATAC general membership. The ATAC may create whatever temporary or additional entities deemed necessary to further its mission.

Essential to the success of the ATAC is the continuing commitment of the chief executives of the involved agencies to participate and cooperate fully in this joint effort.

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